

Members Present: Hank Rauch, Chair, Gary Wells, Vice Chair, Tom Blakely, Beth Blumberg (arrived at 7:10 p.m.), Jim Driscoll, Paul Huegel, Phyllis Jaffee, Sean Keogh. Absent: Jim Tepper

At 7:01 p.m. Mr. Rauch called the meeting to order in Memorial Hall of the Town Hall.

Open Forum

Mr. Rauch spoke to municipal accounting and explained what it means for the benefit of the new members, which included raise and appropriate, free cash, Enterprise Funds, and bonds. There are seminars and training for Finance Committee members once a year and the information will be sent to the members.

Approval of Past Minutes

There were no minutes for the Committee's approval.

Fall Special Town Meeting, Warrant Article Review

Mr. Rauch explained that the Articles will be reviewed and if there are questions the proponents will be asked to come before the Committee, if there are no questions there will be a vote.

Articles 1 & 2 – Mr. Rauch suggested that the Municipal Building Committee (MBC) come to the meeting as they are the proponents of the Spurr House Articles. Mr. Blakeley questioned whether the Articles have to be tied together as they are two separate issues, one deals with removing the authorization to sell and the second one addresses funding the demolition. Mr. Rauch noted that if the first Article does not pass the second one is moot. The MBC, Spurr House Committee and Parkman Street residents will be attending the September 27th Selectmen's meeting. There was a discussion of whether AFC members should attend that meeting but it was agreed that the MBC should come in so that there is the opportunity to ask them questions directly. Ms. Blumberg asked if the Spurr House Committee can attend as they are no longer a committee. They have the option to attend as residents and as former committee members. Mr. Rauch will invite the MBC.

Articles 3, 4, and 5 – Ms. Blumberg will contact the Planning Board Chair and Town Planner to come in. She asked if the Board of Health needs to be involved and they do not as the Article addresses the location only.

Article 6 – Mr. Tepper and Mr. Driscoll will ask the Police and Fire Chiefs to come in.

Article 7 – Mr. Wells explained that this is an accounting issue and cannot be changed. There was a brief discussion regarding when sick leave buy back is paid and how it is determined. Retirements are not always anticipated and funds are not added to the budget as the extra money will impact the tax rate. The vote is to raise and appropriate the funds, not to authorize the Town Accountant to make the payment. This is due the employee per their collective bargaining agreement. Free cash was briefly discussed and Mr. Wells ask the Town Accountant for the certified free cash amount. Ms. Blumberg pointed out that the School Committee can get extra funding for Special Needs, which is the exception to the rule.

Mr. Wells moved to recommend that Town so vote. Mr. Blakely seconded. Voted: 8-0-0

Articles 8 & 9 – Mr. Blakeley noted that he does not feel that the 300th Anniversary Committee needs to come in to just present their financial information. Mr. Wells explained how the Committee obtained funding from the State, what the Town's contribution is, and the process to set up an account to receive and expend the funds. Mr. Rauch will talk to the Committee to obtain their financial information to present on Thursday night.

Article 10 – Insurance Account: Mr. Wells moved to recommend that the Town so vote. Mr. Blakeley seconded. Discussion: Ms. Blumberg asked if the funds could be taken out of free cash and Mr. Wells noted that free cash cannot be applied to budgetary items. Voted: 8-0-0

Article 11 – Mr. Wells explained the Chapter 90 funding process. Mr. Wells moved to recommend that the Town so vote. Ms. Blumberg seconded. Voted: 8-0-0

Article 12 – Mr. Wells spoke with Bruce Tretter regarding the BWALT Easement Survey and Engineering and they will not be ready to make their presentation until 10/13 as none of the Committee members are available until then. He explained the process and timeline for printing the Warrant, noted that it can be included and the AFC can make their recommendation at Town Meeting. Mr. Rauch will put them on the 10/13 agenda, get a copy of their presentation for review, and if there are no questions/concerns they will not have to come in.

Article 13 – Bay State Common Tot Lot: It was agreed to wait until the Warrant closes as the amount was changed to \$70,000 so that the AFC can vote on the same amount as the Selectmen.

Article 14 – Hastings School GeoThermal Engineering: There was a discussion of the Article's wording and some confusion about what the study is for and if the \$34,500 is enough money. It was agreed to ask the School Committee to come in and Ms. Blumberg will contact them.

Article 15 – Senior Center Improvements: Ms. Jaffee will ask Ms. DeManche for clarification on how many square feet of flooring and how many windows will be replaced.

Article 16 – Building Department Records Scanning: Mr. Rauch will ask the Building Commissioner to come in.

Article 17 – Country Club Building Repairs: There are leftover funds from the Country Club roof replacement Article and other needed repairs have been identified. A Town Meeting vote is needed to spend the excess funds.

Mr. Wells moved to amend Article 10 of October 19, 2015 Fall Town Meeting as pursuant to Article 17. Ms. Jaffee seconded. Vote 8-0-0

Article 18 – Conservation/Stormwater Funding: Mr. Wells explained the stormwater management program, which is ongoing every year and that this is part of the DEP's dam safety requirement at Sandra Pond. Mr. Huegel questioned why this Article is on this Warrant and not at the Annual Town Meeting as it is a planned expense every year. Mr. Wells explained that Annual Town Meeting addresses budget items and Fall Town Meeting addresses supplemental issues. This is not a budgetary item per se and it is ongoing maintenance and not an unusual request. It was agreed that Mr. Wells will contact Mr. Walden to come before the Committee for this Article as well as Article 20.

Article 19 – Property Acquisition: Mr. Huegel noted that if the reasoning for the purchase is to square off the property it seems superficial and asked how the value of \$449,000 was determined. He also questioned if the purchase is wise in principal the cost. It was agreed that Mr. Rauch would contact the Town Manager and Ms. Bloomberg contact the School Committee to come before the AFC.

Articles 21 & 22 – Approval of Library Construction Project and Authorization to Apply for Construction Grant: The Library is coming in on Thursday, 9/22/16.

Article 23 – Recreation Commission Fund: Mr. Wells explained that this is procedural vote that has to occur and is approved every year.

Mr. Wells moved to recommend that the Town so vote. Mr. Keogh seconded. Voted: 8-0-0

Article 24 – Accept and Grant of Easements for the Town Hall Parking Lot: Mr. Rauch explained that when the Town renovated the Town Hall issues with easements were discovered. Ms. Blumberg pointed out that there is not money associated with this Article and Mr. Wells explained that the Article is to authorize the Selectmen to negotiate the easements of which most of the details have already been worked out. There was a discussion of the words “purchase” and “eminent domain” used in the Article. As there is no money in the Article there will be no purchases until the Selectmen come back to Town Meeting with a negotiated request. Ms. Blumberg expressed concerns about “eminent domain” and Town Meeting’s reaction to the wording asked if the phrase could be removed. Mr. Wells pointed out that the wording was most likely dictated by Town Counsel. Mr. Rauch will clarify the wording with Mr. Malloy. Mr. Wells noted that it is not in the Committee’s purview to rewrite Articles and the Committee has to make recommendations on what was written.

Article 25 – Trail Easements: The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee will provide the AFC with information and attend the October 13th meeting if necessary. The wording “eminent domain” in the Article will also be clarified with the Town Manager.

Article 26 – Grant of Utility Easements:

Mr. Wells moved to recommend that the Town so vote. Mr. Blakeley seconded. Voted: 8-0-0

Article 27 – Lease Agreement-Cell Provider: the Committee agreed to hold the vote until Mr. Malloy makes the change from “equipment on light poles” to “equipment on a light pole”.

Article 28 – Debt Service Budget Increases:

Mr. Wells moved to recommend that the Town so vote. Mr. Blakely seconded. Voted: 8-0-0

Mr. Rauch summarized who will be asked for clarifications and who will come before the Committee.

Comments and Concerns – Committee Members

Gibbons School Building Committee – Mr. Tepper was not present.

Municipal Building Committee – Mr. Rauch noted there were no changes.

Pre-K to 3 School Building Committee – Mr. Wells noted there were no changes.

Materials Management Committee – Mr. Driscoll noted there were no changes.

Capital Expenditures Committee – Sean Keogh had agreed to sit on committee. Mr. Rauch will find out when the will convene. Mr. Wells directed Mr. Keogh to where on the Town website he

can find the Capital Expenditure Plan to review and explained the Committee's purpose. Mr. Rauch noted that the School Committee has not been disciplined in providing information on their capital expenditure needs, but efforts have been made to rectify the issue.

Public Reminders for Viewers

None

Adjournment

Mr. Wells' motion to adjourn at 8:21 p.m. was seconded by Ms. Jaffee. Voted: 8-0-0

Respectfully submitted,
Paula Covino
Administrative Assistant